



SPARKS

OCTOBER 2024

High West Energy proudly supports Breast Cancer Awareness Month and stands with those affected during this important time.

HIGH WEST ENERGY TO SUNSET INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES IN 2025

High West Energy has been serving this community and surrounding areas for over 85 years by providing affordable and reliable energy and services. As part of our ongoing commitment to maintaining high standards of cybersecurity and operational safety, High West Energy will be sunsetting our information technology services provided to our members and customers in early 2025. This decision is driven by a proactive approach to continue to mitigate potential liabilities and safeguard sensitive information in an increasingly complex digital landscape.

This decision is rooted in our dedication to the continuous protection of the privacy and security of our members. The cybersecurity landscape has evolved dramatically most recently, with increasingly sophisticated threats targeting utility and energy providers.

“Cybersecurity has always been a top priority for us, and sunsetting these IT services will allow us to reallocate our resources to continuously improve safe and reliable electricity at an affordable rate,” said Jared Routh, CEO and General Manager of High West Energy. Sunsetting this program will also enhance

our operational resilience by allowing us to focus our resources on maintaining our systems that ensure our members receive excellent service delivery.

“As we navigate this transition, we remain committed to our members and ensuring their needs are our top priority.”

-Jared Routh, CEO/General Manager

In addition, this decision will allow us to continue to adhere to cybersecurity protocols and standards that help us meet regulatory requirements as well as minimize liability associated with potential data breaches or service interruptions.

As we navigate this change, we remain committed to innovation and continuous improvements within our operations. By continuing to prioritize security and reliability, we uphold our commitment to deliver safe, reliable and competitively priced energy and services to the communities we serve. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our office at 307-245-3261.

HIGH WEST ENERGY

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The mission of High West Energy is to serve our members and communities by providing safe, reliable and competitively priced energy and services.

CONTACT US

307-245-3261

www.highwest.coop

MAIN OFFICE

6270 County Road 212

Pine Bluffs, WY 82082

OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Thursday

7:30 AM - 5 PM

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mike Romsa, District 11

Gary Smith, District 12

Jessica Crowder, District 13

Jerry Burnett, District 14

Damon Birkhofer, District 15

Kosha Olsen, District 16

Kevin Thomas, District 17

HAVE A STORY SUGGESTION?

Email your ideas to:

sparks@highwest.coop

For updates, follow us on Facebook and LinkedIn!

CYBERSECURITY TIPS FOR A SAFER DIGITAL WORLD

Did you know the average household with internet access owns about 17 connected devices? That figure covers a wide range of electronics, including smart phones, computers, streaming devices, smart speakers, home assistants and more. Given our increasing reliance on internet-connected technologies, the likelihood of new cyber threats is ever-present.

High West Energy is deeply committed to ensuring our local system is safe and secure. We routinely monitor cyber risks, and we work together with other co-ops to share the latest advancements in cybersecurity measures.

October is National Cybersecurity Month, and while good cyber hygiene should be practiced year-round, we'd like to share a few cybersecurity tips to help you bolster your online safety.

CO-OP CORNER YOUR ESSENTIAL UPDATES



At the end of every fiscal year, any funds remaining after the cooperative pays operating expenses are allocated to your capital credits accounts based on the electricity you used the previous year. The Board then has the option to vote to retire a portion of that account as capital credits. These credits are one of the many benefits of being a member-owner of High West Energy. More information will be available soon; however, we do need to know your preference for applying the capital credits. Members receiving \$50 or less will receive their capital credits as a bill credit. Members receiving more than \$50 in capital credits can apply the amount to their bill, donate to Operation Round Up®, or receive a check in the mail. **To update or change your selection, please call 307-245-3261. Members must make their selections no later than October 31.**

- Learn how to spot and report phishing attempts. Phishing occurs when criminals use phony emails, direct messages or other types of digital communications that lure you to click a bad link or download a malicious attachment. If you receive a suspicious email or message that includes urgent language, offers that seem too good to be true, generic greetings, poor grammar or an unusual sender address, it could be a phishing attempt. If you spot one, report it as soon as possible, and don't forget to block the sender.

- Create strong, unique passwords. When it comes to passwords, remember that length trumps complexity. Strong passwords contain at least 12 characters and include a mix of letters, numbers and symbols. Create unique passwords for each online account you manage and use phrases you can easily remember.

- Enable multi-factor authentication when available. Multi-factor authentication (also known as 2-factor authentication) adds an extra layer of security to your online accounts. These extra security steps can include facial recognition, fingerprint access, or one-time codes sent to your email or phone.

- Update software regularly. Software and internet-connected devices, including personal computers, smartphones and tablets, should always be current on updates to reduce the risk of infection from ransomware and malware.

Let's all do our part to stay cyber smart and create a safer digital world for all. Visit staysafeonline.org to learn about additional cybersecurity tips.

DIRECTOR'S CORNER - Mike Romsa, District 11

High West Energy celebrates National Co-op Month this October, joining over 30,000 cooperatives across the U.S. in honoring what makes co-ops unique. As not-for-profit utilities, electric cooperatives like High West Energy are rooted in the communities they serve, ensuring reliable power and enhancing local quality of life.

Guided by seven core principles, including open membership, democratic control, and community support, co-ops prioritize member needs and local impact. Beyond electricity, High West Energy invests in economic development, youth programs, scholarships, and charitable initiatives, reinforcing its commitment to community well-being.

By fostering autonomy, cooperation among cooperatives, and ongoing education, co-ops like High West Energy empower members and strengthen community bonds. This Co-op Month, we celebrate the profound impact of cooperative membership, affirming our dedication to serving and enhancing the lives of those we proudly call our neighbors.

